



MEMBERS OF THE Muscatine Fire Department were joined by Day of Caring volunteers from Kent Corporation, MUSCO, and the American Red Cross Wednesday, Sept. 20, in canvassing the Jody, Jeff, and Jill Drive area of Muscatine on Home Fire Safety. The effort resulted in 58 smoke detectors installed and 62 batteries replaced while also discussing fire safety strategy with home owners.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

58 SMOKE DETECTORS INSTALLED ON DAY OF CARING

Fire Department, American Red Cross team up to check, replace smoke detectors

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The American Red Cross usually conducts a national Home First Safety campaign every October. That was not going to be the case this year with Red Cross resources

stretched pretty thin dealing with relief efforts from natural disasters basically from coast to coast.

The cause was not lost, however, and the Muscatine Fire Department, led by Lt. Joe Timmsen, came to the rescue as they usually do in emergency situations. The Day of Caring, sponsored by the United Way, was the perfect opportunity for the Muscatine Fire Department to join with the rest of the community in helping neighbors with a variety of tasks.

For the Fire Department, that meant assisting the American Red Cross with their Home Fire Safety campaign during the 2017 Day of Caring event on Wednesday, Sept. 20.

“We had 18 people who participated,” Lt. Timmsen said. “We installed 58 detectors and 62 batteries in 35 residences.”

The United Way provided 11 volunteers from Kent Corporation and MUSCO to assist with the effort while the Red Cross had a couple of volunteers who brought supplies and additional smoke detectors. The Muscatine Fire Department also had smoke detectors that were provided by the state.

The main focus of this year’s effort was in the Jody, Jeff, and Jill Drive area including homes on Ford Avenue and Laurie Drive. Most residents who were home invited the volunteers in and door knockers were left for those who were not.

But the day was not just about the smoke detectors.

“We also sat down with the occupants of the residences to cover what their escape plan would be in case of a fire,” Lt. Timmsen said. “We also talked with them about fire safety while other members of the group tested and replaced the smoke detectors.”

These volunteers began their day with an 8 a.m. class in the Public Safety Building that featured a video uploaded by the American Red Cross on Home Fire Campaign Training, a discussion

on the best locations for smoke detectors in mobile homes and multiple story homes, and the differences in smoke detectors on the market today.

Most smoke detectors come in one of three varieties including ionization, photoelectric, or dual sensor which uses both ionization and photoelectric. Lt. Timmsen recommends the dual sensor types with at least a 10-year battery which were the ones installed during the Day of Caring. Homeowners were also instructed in how to test the smoke detectors on a regular basis.

“It used to be that smoking and candles were the two main causes of house fires,” Lt. Timmsen said. “Today we find that 40 percent of the structure fires we respond to are cooking fires.”

That is one reason Lt. Timmsen does not recommend having a smoke detector in the kitchen but still close enough to activate in case of a cooking fire. There is usually some smoke or steam when people cook in a kitchen and that can cause the detectors to activate, especially the photoelectric detectors, Lt. Timmsen said. The hallway right outside a kitchen is a good place for one.

“There should be at least one on each level of a home besides having one in the master bedroom of the home,” Lt. Timmsen said. “Children can sleep right through an alarm but it does wake up the parents.”

Anyone who want a smoke detector can email Lt. Timmsen at jtimmsen@muscatineiowa.gov or call (563) 263-9233 to speak with someone in the Muscatine Fire Department.

Residents can also visit the American Red Cross web site to learn more about the Home Fire Safety Campaign at by clicking on the following link: [American Red Cross Home Fire Safety Campaign](#).